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HD **Trudeau ratchets up pipeline pressure on British Columbia; Proposed Trans Mountain freeze threatens consensus on climate change, Prime Minister says**

BY Kelly Cryderman

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CALGARY --

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has increased the pressure on British Columbia in the dispute over the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion, saying the province's proposal to block the project risks alienating Alberta and derailing any consensus on Canada's climate-change plan.

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Just two weeks ago, Mr. Trudeau said he was "not going to opine on disagreements between the provinces." Earlier this week, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr told the House of Commons that Ottawa will not allow B.C. to "stall or stop" the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

In an interview with the National Observer published on Wednesday, Mr. Trudeau made it clear that Alberta's willing participation in a national carbon-pricing scheme is also at stake. With its resource extraction economic base, Alberta plays a pivotal role in any national plan for reducing Canada's greenhouse-gas emissions. Alberta has the highest emissions among the provinces and the oil sands are Canada's fastest-growing source of GHGs.

In the Observer interview, Mr. Trudeau compared B.C. Premier John Horgan's opposition to expanding the Trans Mountain pipeline with former Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall's long battle against Ottawa's plan for a national price on carbon. (Mr. Wall raised concerns about competitiveness and his successor, Scott Moe, promises to follow suit.) The Prime Minister said Mr. Horgan's opposition to the pipeline expansion project – which is rooted in B.C. residents' concerns about oil spills in ocean waters – could just as easily derail a national accord on climate policy and pricing.

"Similarly and frustratingly, John Horgan is actually trying to scuttle our national plan on fighting climate change," Mr. Trudeau said. "By blocking the Kinder Morgan pipeline, he's putting at risk the entire national climate-change plan, because Alberta will not be able to stay on if the Kinder Morgan pipeline doesn't go through."

On Jan. 30, B.C. proposed environmental regulations that would stem any increase in bitumen shipments from Alberta to the B.C. coast until more spill response studies are completed.

Alberta says the B.C. regulation is illegal, and would hinder its plan to export bitumen to rich Asian markets through the pipeline from Edmonton to Burnaby. The expansion received federal approval and Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has called on Ottawa to assert its authority in the matter. She also cut off B.C. wine imports last week and is promising more trade actions.

Ms. Notley has made clear her support for Mr. Trudeau's national climate-change plan, including her province's carbon pricing and cap on oil sands GHGs, hinges on his government's strong backing of the $7.4-billion pipeline project – seen as a lifeline for Alberta's economy. And her chief political rival, United Conservative Party Leader Jason Kenney, has said if he becomes premier after the 2019 provincial election, his government's first act will be to get rid of Alberta's carbon tax of $30 a tonne.

The province's greenhouse-gas emissions are forecast to grow in the years ahead. But Mr. Trudeau said in the interview that if the pipeline project does not go ahead, finding agreement to help the country cut GHG emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 could be more difficult.

"If we don't continue to stand strongly in the national interest, the things that people don't like within the agreement – which is always filled with compromises – are going to mean that there is no agreement, and there is no capacity to reach our climate targets."

Mr. Trudeau noted a "federal backstop" can ensure carbon pricing is applied across the country. "Of course, we'd rather do it with the provincial government, but we will do it whether or not the provincial government agrees," he said.

B.C. Environment Minister George Heyman said in a statement on Thursday: "Our government is merely seeking to consult with British Columbians on proposed regulations to protect our environment, through improved spills prevention, response and recovery measures. We are very supportive of the pan-Canadian approach to climate action."

But the opposition Liberals used Mr. Trudeau's remarks to demand that the B.C. government back down in its fight against the pipeline project.

"He started this fight with Alberta, and now sadly the Prime Minister is stepping in to referee this squabble,"B.C. Liberal Leader Andrew Wilkinson said. "The Premier knows he has made a mistake. He stands alone and he needs to admit that."

On Thursday, the National Energy Board also issued decisions that mean Trans Mountain has board approvals to begin clearing and grading work at the entrance of the Burnaby Mountain tunnel, or portal, on its Westridge Marine Terminal. The work is still subject to other federal, provincial and municipal permits, and the NEB noted construction is not yet authorized along the rest of the pipeline route.

With a report from Justine Hunter in Victoria

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